Artemis Greek Goddess or Amazon Mother-God?

Artemis Greek Goddess of Classical myth is identified frequently as the Deity of the Amazons. It is often claimed that they worshiped Artemis and Ares (Diana and Mars) – the Moon-and-Huntress goddess and the "god" of war.

Is this true? As with many (but by no means all) the stories told about the Amazons, there is some truth in this, but in order to understand it correctly one needs to know a little more.

Artemis Greek Goddess of hunting, the moon etc. was not the same Artemis worshiped by the Amazons. The picture on this page shows the famous Artemis (or Diana) of Ephesus as seen in the Temple of Ephesus founded by the great Amazon Queen Myrine.

As you see she, is by no means Artemis Greek Goddess of popular imagination. Indeed, she is neither Greek nor a Goddess!

She is in fact, in the first place, an Asian form, and in the second place – and far more importantly – she is not a "Goddess" in the sense of a demigod in a "polytheistic" pantheon: She is the one Supreme Being and Mother Creatrix of all.

The name Diana is probably better than Artemis. Diana is simply a form of Dia – the fundamental name of God in most Indo-European languages (in English – deity, divine, theology are some of its variants).

The many-breasted image of Great Diana indicates her all-nourishing nature, for She is the Creatrix and Preserver of the world, while the lower "tiers" of Her image sustain every kind of living thing, animal and vegetative, for She is the Great Mother of All.

Artemis Greek Goddess is to some extent a "lunarized" version of the original Great Diana, cut down to fit into patriarchal mythology and assigned a minor role in a male-dominated pantheon.

Artemis of the Amazons was God in Her original feminine form, and Her greatest Temple (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient world) founded by the Amazon Queen Myrine, was such a force for true Religion that even by the time of the Classical decadence, the earliest Christian preachers were greeted with the defiant, loyal cry of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

The suggestion that the Amazons also worshiped Ares/Mars, the

masculine war-"god" seems easier to answer. The Amazons worshiped no godlings fashioned by the imagination of the mascûli. Nor was war their primary concern as a people and a civilization – that error of perspective derives from histories written by their enemies, who only met them in war.

So can this be discounted entirely? Not quite. The Greeks always assimilated foreign deities into their own system, even when they did not really fit. Worshipers of the Great Mother recognize Her seven Angels, of whom one is Sai Vikhë – the feminine Angel (or "goddess") of battle. Sai Vikhë's *cultus* certainly existed among the Amazons and was, quite naturally, strongest among the armed forces, who were the only Amazons with whom hostile patriarchal peoples came into contact.

So to the tales of worshiping Ares also, when one strips away the patriarchal prejudice and propaganda, there is an element of truth.

And like the Amazons of old we cry "Haya Vikhë!" And while Artemis Greek Goddess in her "lunarized" patriarchal form means little to us, we can say with all our hearts: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" – and of Amazons everywhere.

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Joyce on May 11, 2010 at 12:10 am

I never knew that artemis was not a godess I have a greek project on artemis and I would use some of these facts

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